

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A laser machining apparatus comprising a beam splitting means, a deflection means, a beam combining means and a machining lens, said beam splitting means splitting a laser beam into a plurality of beam splits different in optical path, said beam combining means aligning said optical paths of said beam splits ~~almost in one and~~ essentially the same direction so that said beam splits are incident on said machining lens, ~~said laser machining apparatus being characterized in that:~~

said beam combining means ~~is constituted by~~ comprising a total reflection/transmission type beam combining means and a polarizing type beam combining means; and

wherein the optical paths of two of said beam splits are aligned ~~almost in one and~~ essentially the same direction by said total reflection/transmission type beam combining means, whereupon optical paths of said two beam splits and the other beam splits are aligned ~~almost in one and~~ essentially the same direction by said polarizing type beam combining means.

2. (Currently amended) A laser machining apparatus according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein two of said beam splits are deflected by a two-dimensional deflection means individually, whereupon optical paths of said two beam splits are aligned ~~almost in one and~~ essentially the same direction by said total reflection/transmission type beam combining means, while an outgoing beam of said polarizing type beam combining means is deflected two-dimensionally.

3. (Currently amended) A laser machining apparatus according to Claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a relay optical system is disposed between said two-dimensional deflection means disposed on the incoming side of said polarizing type beam combining means and a two-dimensional deflection means disposed on the outgoing side thereof.